

COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, INC.
THE HAROLD PRATT HOUSE 58 EAST 68TH STREET
NEW YORK 21, N.Y.

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May 14, 1953

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Mr. Allen Dulles
1308 29th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Dulles:

In his letter to you of April 29, George Franklin observed that we would give you further information about the coming conference here on June fifth and sixth. I would like to do this without further delay but want first to say how deeply we appreciate your willingness to be the speaker and guest of honor at the evening meeting on the fifth. You may be sure that the Committee representatives, as some have already indicated, look forward with great anticipation to the opportunity for discussion with you.

The evening meeting will begin at seven-thirty--not seven-fifteen, as George wrote. We have asked Grayson Kirk to preside. You recall that there are customarily about sixty men present, divided more or less evenly between Council members and Committee representatives. As usual, we shall try to preserve a quite informal spirit, and of course business dress will be in order.

The daytime sessions on the fifth begin at ten a.m. and two p.m. To help with the discussions, we have invited six or seven special guests who have particular competence with respect to the conference theme. They include General Donovan, Hanson W. Baldwin, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Paul M.A. Linebarger, Edward W. Barrett, Edmond Taylor, and Bill Costello (White House correspondent of the Columbia Broadcasting System). Some of these have already accepted and we shall no doubt have two or three others with us.

The real function of the conference is to examine the possibilities and limitations of psychological warfare--perhaps we ought to call it political warfare--as an instrument of U.S. policy in the cold war. There is, I find, a great deal of ignorance and hence uneasiness on the part of Committee members regarding the U.S. commitment to psychological warfare. At the daytime sessions we shall be dealing with questions such as these:

Can a free society such as ours achieve the co-ordinated national strategy described by the President in his San Francisco speech last October? If so, at what price? Does the effective pursuit of psychological warfare in the cold war involve the sacrifice of public understanding at home? To what extent should we commit ourselves in the cold war to the tactics of subversion which the Allies practiced in World War II? Not least of all,

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how persuasive can we really be, given our form of society? In the course of the discussions it seems clear that we should cover the impact of a U.S. psychological offensive upon the Russians and the satellite nations, upon our Allies and the so-called neutrals, and upon our own people at home. I have no doubt that the advisable relations between a psychological offensive and the processes of diplomacy and negotiation will figure in the discussions.

This may seem like a formidable assignment for a group which will be composed primarily of laymen—and no doubt it is. However, we feel it important to do what we can to help these community leaders to a better appreciation of the means at our disposal for effective pursuit of cold war objectives.

As George observed we want you to be entirely free to speak as you see fit regarding such of the elements described above as seem suitable to you for discussion. Please have no misgivings about duplicating the substantive content of the daytime sessions. In the nature of things, if you would be willing to talk, say, three quarters of an hour, this would leave ample time for subsequent discussion.

If you would like further information about the proposed proceedings, or about the persons to be present, please let me know. It goes without saying that we shall impress upon delegates the private nature of the proceedings. It is our intention to restrict the attendance to U.S. citizens.

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours,


Joseph Barber

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